

## THE DINING CAR CLEW

By HEADON HILL

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"The chief wants to see you, Inspector Grantham," said a messenger coming into the room at New Scotland Yard.

I went at once to the chief superintendent's office and was received by my superior officer with a friendly nod.

"Good news for you, Grantham," he said. "Some one has fairly given Brady away. Read that letter and look at that photo."

The letter was undated and unsigned. It was in these words:

Brady, the bank note forger, intends to break cover this afternoon and make a bolt for the States. He will leave Euston for Liverpool by the 5:30 corridor express, accompanied by his female accomplice, named Daisy Gilbert. Brady is certain to be disguised. The writer, however, in possession of a photograph of Daisy Gilbert, who, not being as yet known to the police, may possibly travel in propria persona.

The photograph was that of a bold, saucy-eyed young woman with a profusion of light hair and very showily attired in evening dress. A mark on the neck attracted my attention.

"One would have thought that a woman of that type would have got the photographer to retouch the mark out of the picture," I said. "What do you make of it all, sir—a split in the camp?"

"The chances are that jealousy of this person Gilbert prompted the information."

I could not gainsay the chief's view. In nine cases out of ten the anonymous letters that lead to the capture of important criminals are due to feminine spite. And yet there was the chance that the friendly letter might be a "plant."

The warrant for Joe Brady had been in my hands for six weeks. The only credit I could so far take was that my pursuit had been so keen that he had not dared to come out into the open and make a bolt for it.

I glanced at the clock. It was nearly 5 o'clock and I had two hours and a half to make arrangements for the capture. I mentioned the names of the plain clothes men whom I desired to support me and took my departure.

So it was that at 5 o'clock I drove up a hansom to the terminus, carefully dressed in the garments of a bishop and with my face altered from all semblance to the original. To be in keeping with my assumed character in the notable event of Brady having conspired on the watch, I went into the dining office and took a first class seat for Liverpool, after which I strolled out on to the platform just as the train of vestibule cars was backing into position.

Early as it was, my two subordinates had by my direction preceded me to the station, though they were not to openly communicate with me till the supreme moment. One of them, a smart young sergeant named Parker, who was got up as a blue jacket, contrived to whisper in my ear as I stood at the book-stall.

"The girl is here, apparently alone. Came ten minutes ago. Took two first to Liverpool. Now in the ladies' waiting room."

Parker and his colleague had of course had a sight of the photograph. Information was welcome, as proving that at any rate the letter received at the yard had some foundation and was not, as I had half feared, a practical joke designed to lead us on a wild goose chase.

I sat down on a bench opposite the dining car to await developments. A bishop is a common object nowadays, and my lined hat and gaiters attracted but little attention. I was able to look over the top of the Church Times, which I had purchased, and so watch the arrival of passengers. A score of people had taken their seats in the dining car, but not one of them, allowing for the most elaborate disguise, could I identify as Joe Brady. They were mostly unmistakable Americans returning to their native land in parties of three and four.

Suddenly an incident occurred which at the time caused me some uneasiness. Sergeant Parker's voice reached me, raised in tones of exhortation.

"No, I don't want a drink, mate, and by the same token you seem to have had a full dose already," he was saying.

A little way along the platform my assistant had been accosted by a half-tipsy blue jacket, who was trying to pull him into the buffet. The sailor's cap proclaimed that he belonged to the same ship as that which Parker's disguise denoted, the *Majestic*. To my relief, the man seemed to be too muddled to perceive that the sergeant was no shipmate of his, but staggered off, dropping his bundle once or twice, to the front of the train.

The sailor had hardly disappeared when the original of the photograph came out of the waiting room and crossed the platform to the dining car. She was wearing a well-cut serge costume and had made no attempt at disguise, even the mark on her neck being distinctly visible above the collar of her dress.

But where was the redoubtable Brady? It was 5:25 now, and there were no signs of Miss or Mrs. Daisy Gilbert. The question was plainly beginning to agitate the lady. She glanced at the platform of the car gazing anxiously toward the entrance from the looking glass.

The woman, well, well, I decided to wait a moment. I decided to wait a moment. I decided to wait a moment.

ing did not come and she went on in the train I would go too. If she got out and abandoned her journey I and my assistants would shadow her wherever she went.

Contriving a word with Parker, I hastily sketched my intentions and bade him go forward to the third class carriage, into one of which he was to jump at the last minute if he saw me board the dining car.

A moment later I had taken my seat in the car, for Gilbert, after one last distracted gaze to the station entrance, had decided to pursue her journey. As the train gathered speed I settled down to the task of watching for signs of her fraternizing with one of the other passengers, but nothing of the sort occurred. She sat looking out of the window, and presently a tear stole down her cheek—only one, but a genuine tear.

Moved by a sudden impulse, I changed my seat and took the place opposite to her at the white draped table. My episcopal garb warranted, I thought, the proffer of consolation, in the course of which the pumping process might be administered.

Imagine, then, my astonishment when my overtures were received with:

"What's the use of talking like that? You're the 'tee that's after Joe Brady, ain't you?"

A denial would certainly not have been believed, so I nodded admission. "You've had your trouble for nothing, I'm afraid. He must have got wind of that letter and kept out of the way."

"The letter!" I exclaimed in bewilderment.

"I wrote it myself," replied the girl. "I wanted him caught, you see. Don't ask why; it's a woman's reason. But he's too cunning for me, and now I suppose he'll kill me some time."

The ice being broken, she poured forth a flood of recriminations against her late associate, affirming that she had no idea of his true character and giving me the address of his hiding place in Battersea.

"We don't stop till Crews, but you'd better wire to your people from there to arrest him, or at any rate shadow him till you get back," she advised.

I had already decided to do so, but I was still not quite satisfied. Why had she gone on in the train after finding that her communication to the police had been abortive?

Her home was in New York, she said, and, having her passage ticket taken, she wished to use it and cut herself adrift from evil associates. So the train rushed northward, the other passengers in the car soon ceasing to be amused by the friendship struck up between the elderly bishop and the solitary traveler.

At last the train ran into Crews station, and as I rose she put out her well-gloved hand. "Goodbye, Mr. Grantham. I do hope you'll catch him," she said. "My life won't be safe till he's under lock and key."

"But this is not goodby. I am only going to send off the wire," I said. "I am going on with you to Liverpool to see you safe on board the steamer."

It was a chance shot, but it went home. She turned ashy pale, and I knew that she had been working with the object of getting rid of me at Crews. But where was Brady?

The question was answered by Daisy Gilbert herself in the anguished cry of "My father! Oh, my father!" Following her gaze to the platform, I saw outside the car window two sailors of the *Majestic* with linked arms. One of them was handcuffed.

"I've got him, sir," said Parker. "By luck I traveled down in the same compartment and laid a few conversational traps for him. He had neglected to sufficiently post himself in detail about our fine old craft. I smelt a rat before we'd gone twenty miles."

"Daisy Gilbert" was indeed Brady's daughter, and I could not help being sorry for her. She had made a bold bid to hoodwink us by concentrating the attention of our combined forces on the dining car while her father traveled in another part of the train, but she hardly allowed for the caution of an experienced officer.

The Sea of Sahara.

French engineers have declared that it is perfectly feasible to convert the desert of Sahara into a vast lake, thus opening to commerce great regions of the interior of Africa which can now only be reached by long, tedious and dangerous caravan journeys. They say that a large portion of the desert lies below the level of the Atlantic and that by digging a canal to let in the waters of the ocean the great change could be effected easily and at a cost which would be small compared to the benefits which would accrue. If the whole desert lay below the level of the Atlantic the flooding of it would create a sea more than four times as big as the Mediterranean; but, as the Sahara is composed of elevated plateaus, mountain ranges and depressions, only a part would be covered with water when the waves of the ocean were let in, and the new sea thus formed would be an irregular body of water probably of about the same size as the Mediterranean. Great commercial cities would at once spring up on its shores and trade and civilization strike at once to the heart of Africa. The sea of Sahara may never become a reality, but in any event it is a gigantic and pleasing dream.

Killed by Fear.  
Frederick I. of Prussia was killed by fear. His wife was insane, and one day she escaped from her keeper and, dabbled her clothes with blood, rushed upon her husband while he was dozing in his chair. King Frederick imagined her to be the White Lady, whose ghost was believed to invariably appear whenever the death of a member of the royal family was to occur, and he was thrown into a fever and died six weeks.

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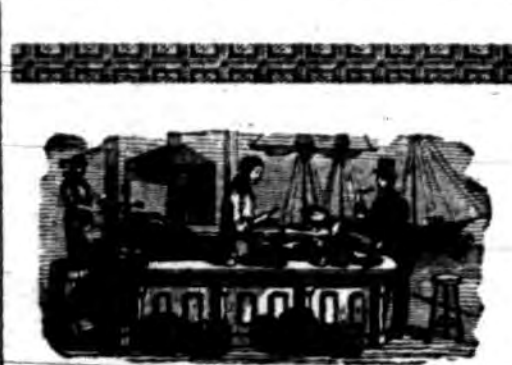
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